WARMINSTER,

January 27th, 1906.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

It is again my duty to present to the Council my annual report as to the health and sanitary condition of the town during the past year.

From the tables accompanying this report it will be seen that the deaths of eighty-seven persons were registered in the district, giving a death-rate of 15·6 per 1,000, but from this number must be deducted the deaths of fourteen persons (five in the Cottage Hospital and nine in the Workhouse Infirmary) not resident in the town; this reduces the number to seventy-three deaths, which gives a death-rate of only 13 per 1,000. Two deaths occurred from measles, one from whooping cough, and one from erysipelas. The births numbered 115, equal to a birth-rate of 20·7 per 1,000.

An unfortunate outbreak of scarlet fever occurred at the end of August, which has continued up to the present time, and we have still a few cases under treatment in the Isolation Hospital. Since the outbreak commenced fifty-six cases have been notified to me, viz., six in August, fourteen in September, fourteen in October, eleven in November, and the same number in December. Fifteen cases occurred in one establishment in the town; in two families there were five cases, and three cases and two cases occurred in two families; the remainder were single cases in a household. Twenty-four cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital, and with the exception of a short period in September, when we were rather pressed for room, and were obliged to refuse admittance for a few days to two cases, the hospital accommodation was ample, and all the cases did wonderfully well. The majority of the cases were of a mild description, and no death occurred. No case of enteric fever or diphtheria was notified to me, and only one case of erysipelas, which proved fatal.

Regular inspections are made, in company with the Sanitary Officer, of all parts of the town. The cottage accommodation is equal to the demand, but I think a few cottages of superior class would meet with ready tenants. At the present time there are a number of residential houses and cottages vacant in the town, more than I remember at any time for many years. No new cottages have been erected, but seven cottages in Carson's Yard have been pulled down.

The provision of a Smallpox Hospital has received a vast amount of consideration by the Sanitary Committee, but the difficulty has been to obtain a suitable site. I would suggest (but I am aware my suggestion will require much consideration, and will meet with some amount of opposition) that the present Isolation Hospital should be, when required, used as a Smallpox Hospital; that if an outbreak of that disease should unfortunately occur, any cases of an infectious nature that should by chance happen to be in the hospital, should be moved for treatment to their own homes. This would involve the purchase of the two cottages situated near, but they would be useful as storehouses for the beds, mattresses, &c., at present in use.

The water supply is still most satisfactory, both as regards quantity and quality. Although I have not for the past few years had the water analysed on behalf of the Council, nevertheless I have been able within the last few weeks to secure an independent analysis, which was most satisfactory, and stamps it as being of undoubted and continued purity.

Particular attention has been paid to the condition of the dairies and cowsheds in the town. There are at present twenty-four dairies under inspection, three of which send their milk away, the remainder retail milk in the town; consequently have little or no use for their dairies. We found all the dairies clean and well kept, and there was great improvement in the condition of the cowsheds, and we hope that more attention is paid to the condition of the cows and the cleanliness of the milkers and those employed in dairy work.

The slaughter-houses, which number ten, have been regularly inspected, and found satisfactory. The bakehouses, which come under the Workshop and Factory Act, number seventeen, and without exception we found them clean and well kept. Some of them are of the most modern construction, and will compare favourably with any in the county.

The workshops in the town, which number twenty-four, and employ about 100 hands, have been inspected and found fairly satisfactory. The principal businesses carried on are tailoring and dressmaking. One of the latter was reported as being overcrowded, but the Sanitary Officer's measurements admit of sufficient space for seven workers, whereas only five are employed. The occupier has, however, made arrangements for moving into a larger house, which will do away with any difficulty in the matter.

The saw mills, shirt factory, iron works, and corn mills have been inspected, and inquiries made as to lavatory accommodation in connection with the workshops.

There has been some improvement in the lighting of the town, which has been extended for some distance up the Victoria-road, and new lamps have been placed in localities where they were much needed.

The usual statistical tables accompany this report.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

FRED. I. FLOWER,

Medical Officer of Health.

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